DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 053 745 LI 002 979

TITLE	An Identification of Problems Relating to Federal Procurement of Library Materials Prepared for Commission on Government Procurement.
INSTITUTION	Federal Library Committee, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	10 Nov 70
NOTE	7p.; (0 References)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Government Libraries, *Library Acquisition, Library Collections, *Library Expenditures, *Library Materials, Problems, *Purchasing

ABSTRACT

The Federal Library Committee through the Task Force on Procurement Procedures in Federal Libraries is examining all problems and is recommending policies, procedures, and practices which will maximize the efficient procurement of library materials. It is suggested that the vehicle for this investigation be the appropriate Commission on Government Procurement work group. The required action includes: (1) Identification of improvements in procurement of library materials possible under existing laws and regulations. (2) Changes in laws or regulations necessary to overcome known difficulties in procurement of library materials. (3) Establishment of a set of procedures, definitions, simplified methods and forms for procurement of library materials. (Author/MM)

ED053745

FEDERAL LIBRARY COMMITTEE
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20540

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

AN IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS

RELATING TO

FEDERAL PROCUREMENT OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

PREPARED FOR

COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

LI 002 979

November 10, 1970

PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP—Library of Congress (Librarian of Congress, Chairman), National Agricultural Library, National Library of Medicine, Department of State, Department of the Treasury, Department of Defense, Department of Justice, Post Office Department, Department of the Interior, Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Transportation.

ROTATING MEMBERSHIP, 1969-71—Atomic Energy Commission, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Science Foundation, Smithsonian Institution, Supreme Court of the United States, Veterans Administration.

OBSERVERS—Bureau of the Budget and Office of Science and Technology of the Executive Office of the President, Library of Congress, Division of Library Services of the Office of Education of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

LIBRARY MATERIALS

Library materials consist of recorded information, such as, but not limited to: books, documents, periodicals, serials, technical reports, dissertations, pamphlets, manuscripts, films, microtexts, slides, audio discs or tapes, maps and photos.

Technology has progressed to the point where libraries are becoming more involved in the purchase and development of computer data bases and computer software programs. Also, certain general aspects of procurement relate to libraries. For example, the procurement of office equipment and supplies, preservation services and cataloging services all have direct effect upon library procurement practices.

For the purpose of this paper, however, emphasis will be placed upon library materials as described in paragraph one.

THE PROBLEM

Librarians in the Federal Government experience great difficulty in obtaining library materials at the time they are needed and without expenditure of excessive effort in cutting through regulatory barriers. There are two significant aspects of the problem:

1. There is great variation in inter and intra-agency interpretation of the regulations with frequent insistence on such literal interpretation as to mullify the purpose of the regulation. Administrative costs of procurement are increased out of proportion to the dollar cost of the item.

2. Procurement regulations are usually drafted for the purchase of supplies and equipment for which there can be real price competition because identical, or similar, items may be manufactured by many firms, whereas in the case of books and journals and other library materials the copyright law usually limits production of an item to a single publisher so that the buyer cannot substitute the work of one publisher for another and thus bargain for a price differential. Definitions and terms used in procurement

are difficult to apply to book and publication trade practices. Quality assurance safeguards are generally not applied by procurement agencies in selecting book or other library material vendors. Thus, the marginal or least satisfactory vendor is favored if his price is lowest.

The two aspects of the problem as noted lead to a multitude of specific problems which inhibit the procurement of library materials. Service to Federal research is handicapped and the cost of procurement increased.

TYPICAL PROBLEM IMPLICATIONS

Specific issues resulting from the identified problems include:

1. Lack of Federal procurement quality assurance standards applicable to book and periodical dealers. This results in awards to marginal suppliers, and/or continued awards to delinquent or unsatisfactory suppliers, since award to the low bidder is usually made. Lack of evaluative criteria that will permit a contracting officer to determine realistically a bidder's ability to perform the essential services required in supplying library materials. Lack of proof-of-performance requirements in contracts, needed in all contracts for periodical subscriptions.

2. There is lack of differentiation in procurement methods required for various types of library materials, and failure to recognize need for specialized dealer knowledge (i.e., foreign publications (interpretation of the Buy American Act) serials, repeated small purchases, etc.). Procurement of specialized items (i.e., out-of-print books, pre-publication priced items, limited edition books) is often tried through dealers rather than direct from source with the result that books and special offers become unavailable.

3. Complicated and involved clauses having little relevance to book industry operations are incorporated or required in annual book contracts. This often discourages competition

because government requests for bids are viewed as too complicated to attract the most capable suppliers. Misunderstanding of bid requirement sometimes disqualifies bidders. There is a need for development of a simplified, uniform and flexible schedule for library materials procurement.

4. Lack of simplified and standardized order forms and procedures which delay even small procurements and require costly and time consuming transcribing of library orders by procurement offices. Forms compatible with industry requirements and automated systems are needed.

5. There is need for simplified and rapid default and re-procurement procedures to permit library material to be procured without the heavy administrative costs usually involved. Under some annual contracts, each order must be defaulted, and it is difficult to terminate the basic contract.

6. There is lack of firm cost figures on such items as FOB source vs. FOB destination prices. The use of indicia labels should be studied. There is need for clarification of "most advantageous prices" to the government, including hidden administrative costs which are shifted to the government by unsatisfactory suppliers.

7. Lack of firm and understandable official guidelines for librarians and book procurement personnel. Types of procurement possible under present law and regulation frequently are not fully understood by librarians. There is an urgent need for a procedures manual supported by GSA and Comptroller General decisions outlining the various procurement methods, advantages and disadvantages, limitations, best sources for various types of materials, etc.

8. Weaknesses in the low bidder system. The feasibility and desirability of an exception to bid system for library materials procurement when this serves the best interests of the government should be surveyed in depth.

9. Multi-year contracts, "till forbid" or standing orders arrangements, uniform invoicing requirements, etc., also need study.

10. Federal Supply Schedule book contracts present some difficulties in use. Clarification is needed in contracting office responsibilities, waivers, and mandatory use; definitions of book categories in FSS Gr. 76, Part III; direct use of schedules (without intervening step of a procurement office); simplifying default procedures, etc.

11. Year-end procurments cause losses of monies due to non-receipt of ordered items.

REQUIRED ACTION

Identification of improvements in procurement of library materials possible under existing laws and regulations.

Changes in laws or regulations necessary to overcome known difficulties in procurement of library materials.

Establishment of a set of procedures, definitions, simplified methods and forms for procurement of library materials.

FEDERAL LIBRARY COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

The Federal Library Committee through the Task Force on Procurement Procedures in Federal Libraries will welcome the opportunity to examine all problems and to recommend policies, procedures, and practices which will maximize the efficient procurement of library materials. It is suggested that the vehicle for this investigation be the appropriate Commission on Government Procurement work group.

SUB-COMMITTEE ON PROCUREMENT PROBLEMS

Salvatore L. Costabile, Chairman
Deputy Chief
Technical Services Division
National Library of Medicine
8600 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20014
Phone: AC 301 496-6133/34
Code 14, Ext. 66133/34 STOP 216

Logan O. Cowgill
Assistant Manager
Water Resources Scientific
Information Center
Department of the Interior

Katherine Magraw
Library Services Branch
Bureau of Naval Personnel
Department of the Navy

Mariana J. Thurber
Chief Acquisition
Army Library Program

Frank Kurt Cylke
Executive Secretary
Federal Library Committee
Room 310
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20540
Phone: AC 202 426-6055
Code 182, Ext. 6055 STOP 303

TASK FORCE ON
PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES IN FEDERAL LIBRARIES

The purpose of this Task Force is to review and compile the laws and regulations related to procurement and disposal of library materials for Federal libraries; to review existing procurement practices; to recommend revisions in law, regulations, or practice which will facilitate the procurement of library materials and contribute to the economy and efficiency of Federal libraries. (Established 1965)

ROSTER

Salvatore L. Costabile, Chairman
Deputy Chief
Technical Services Division
National Library of Medicine
8600 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20014
Phone: AC 301 496-6133/34
Code 14, Ext. 66133/34 STOP 216

Logan O. Cowgill
Assistant Manager
Water Resources Scientific
Information Center
Department of the Interior

Francis H. Henshaw
Chief,
Order Division
Library of Congress

Marvin P. Hogan
Library Director
Department of Justice

Robert E. Hughes
Assistant Director
Procurement Division
General Services Administration

Mrs. Jennifer V. Magnus
Assistant Chief,
Order Division
Library of Congress

Katherine Magraw
Library Services Branch
Bureau of Naval Personnel
Department of the Navy

John Morrow
Chief
Technical Services Branch
Department of State

Jack P. Seremeta
Chief
Office Supply Section
P.O.B., Federal Supply Service
General Services Administration

Frank Kurt Cylke
Executive Secretary
Federal Library Committee
Room 310
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20540
Phone: AC 202 426-6055
Code 182, Ext. 6055 STOP 303